



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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By: Sgt. Michelle Brown
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Alaska National Guardsmen deploy for international peacekeeping exercise

CAMP DENALI, Alaska — Approximately 80 Alaska National Guardsmen are slated to participate in the U.S. Army Pacific exercise, Khaan Quest 2012 (KQ12), a multinational training exercise held at the Mongolian Armed Forces Peace Support Center near Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, August 11-23, 2012.

Khaan Quest 2012 is a U.S. Army Pacific (USARPAC) sponsored exercise designed to strengthen the capabilities of U.S., Mongolian, and other international forces in the Pacific region, to enhance peace-support operations, training, and increase interoperability and planning capabilities among the participating nations.

"Khaan Quest is a phenomenal exercise that contributes to regional peacekeeping, while strengthening the Alaska National Guard state partnership program with Mongolia," said Maj. Gen. Thomas H. Katkus, Adjutant General of the Alaska National Guard. "Alaska National Guard members will participate in training events that bolster military-to-military cooperation, while developing interpersonal relationships with service members from Mongolia and other Asia-Pacific countries."

This year's Khaan Quest exercise consists of a Battalion-Level staff exercise, Platoon-level Counter-Improvised Explosive Device Training, Field Training Exercise Lane Training, Military First Responder Training, Engineer Subject Matter Expert Exchange and a Medical Humanitarian Civic Action Outreach Project.

KQ12 will host more than 1,000 soldiers from 10 countries to include 276 U.S. personnel and international participants from South Korea, India, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Japan, France, United Kingdom and Germany. Kazakhstan, Russia and China will send observers to the exercise.

"The planning effort by our staff leading up to this overseas training deployment has been outstanding. My compliments go out to everyone who has been involved in organizing and coordinating this multinational event," said Col. Michael A. Thompson, 297th Battlefield

Surveillance Brigade Commander, Alaska Army National Guard. Thompson is this year's Exercise Director in charge of all U.S. Army forces for USARPAC. "Our Soldiers are enthusiastic about training in this intriguing nation with our Mongolian partners, and also with other participating nations' militaries. We're looking forward to it."

Since 2003, the Alaska National Guard and Mongolia have been forming a relationship and partnership as part of USARPAC's Theater Security Cooperation Program which focuses on security and stability of the Pacific.

"It's an extraordinary opportunity to increase interoperability among participating nations, and we're proud to continue our strong partnership with our Mongolian friends during Khaan Quest 12," Katkus said.

This exercise marks the tenth anniversary of this regionally significant training event. Media interested in covering this exercise should contact the exercise public affairs officer, Capt. Amy Slinker, at amyslinker@gmail.com or for more information contact

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Cutlines:

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Capt. Tori Schmidt, a physician assistant with the Alaska Army National Guard's 297th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade, boards a KC-135 bound for Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, Aug. 10 to participate in Khaan Quest 12, a multinational training exercise sponsored by U.S. Army Pacific. About 80 Guard members from the Alaska National Guard will travel to Mongolia to participate in the peacekeeping exercise that features more than 1,000 military members from 10 countries. Photo: Kalei Rupp, Alaska National Guard Public Affairs

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Alaska National Guard members board a KC-135 from the Washington Air National Guard's 141st Air Refueling Wing enroute to Mongolia Aug. 10 to participate in Khaan Quest 12, a multinational training exercise sponsored by U.S. Army Pacific. The exercise runs from Aug. 11-23 at the Mongolian Armed Forces Peace Support Center near Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. Photo: Kalei Rupp, Alaska National Guard Public Affairs

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Alaska National Guard members are en route to Mongolia Aug. 10 to participate in Khaan Quest 12, a multinational training exercise sponsored by U.S. Army Pacific. The Washington Air National Guard's 141st Air Refueling Wing flew the Alaska Guard members onboard a KC-135 for the approximately 11 hour flight to Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. Photo: Kalei Rupp, Alaska National Guard Public Affairs